

# Poa anceps

## COMMON NAMES

broad-leaved poa

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)


## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Very variable, coarse, light green, greenish brown to bluish green perennial tufted grass to 1 m, with stiff erect leaves < stems, or often scrambling and trailing to 2 m, with hanging leaves and stems drooping from thick stolons, rooting at nodes below tufts; branching extravaginal, with up to three, short, glabrous, obtuse, bract-like sheaths at base; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** light green to light brown, coriaceous, folded and strongly keeled, lateral ribs conspicuous, smooth or slightly scabrid above, rarely minutely scabrid throughout. **Ligule** 0.5 mm, a truncate usually long-ciliate rim, scabrid abaxially. **Leaf-blade** coriaceous, folded-flat, 100–400 × 1.0–6.5 mm, abaxially with prominent, thickened midrib, and numerous, distinct lateral ribs, smooth apart from prickle-teeth near tip; upper surface smooth, or scabrid on ribs, rarely papillose-scabrid, occasionally with fringe of stiff short hairs above ligule; margins smooth or scabrid, thickened, tip acuminate or abruptly acute, often pungent, scabrid. **Culm** 150–700 mm, often not far exerted beyond uppermost leaf-sheath, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 100–280 mm, usually open with numerous spreading branches, sometimes contracted, branches whorled, very slender; rachis and primary branches often smooth, secondary branchlets finely, sharply, densely or sparsely scabrid or smooth, often spikelet-bearing ± throughout. **Spikelets** numerous, 3.0–7.5 mm, 2–8-flowered light green. **Glumes** subequal, narrow- to elliptic-lanceolate, acute to subobtuse, occasionally smooth throughout, or upper  scabrid; lower slightly shorter, lower glume 2.0–4.5 mm, 3-nerved, upper 2.5–5.0 mm, 3-nerved. **Lemma** 3.0–4.5 mm, 5–7-nerved, elliptic-oblong, acute to subobtuse, internerves finely scaberulous throughout, occasionally only minutely papillose, bearing short crinkled hairs on lower ½ of midnerve and near base of outer lateral nerves; margins minutely scabrid. **Palea** 2.5–4.0 mm, keels finely scabrid, interkeel and flanks smooth or minutely scabrid. **Callus** with thick tuft of soft crinkled hairs. **Rachilla** c. 0.5 mm, smooth or minutely, sparsely scabrid; prolongation c. twice as long. **Lodicules** c. 0.5 mm, occasionally hair-tipped. **Anthers** 1.5–2.5 mm. **Seed** c. 2.0 × 0.5 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The Kermadec Islands *Poa polyphylla* Hack. is closely related (see under that species). *Poa anceps* is most likely to be confused with *Poa xenica* (see under that species) and *Poa chathamica* (see under that species). However, as these species grow in habitats where *Poa anceps* is not found confusion in the field is unlikely.



Maungapakeha taipo, Wairarapa. Nov 2004.  
Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Eastbourne Hills. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Three Kings, North and South Islands (north and western coasts as far south as George Sound, on Banks Peninsula in the east).

## HABITAT

Coastal, lowland to subalpine. On coastal and inland cliffs, on rock falls, in open forest, scrub and grassland.

## GENUS

Poa

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Poa anceps* G.Forst.

## SYNONYMS

*Poa anceps* G.Forst. var. *anceps*; *Poa anceps* var. *elata* Hook.f.; *Poa anceps* var. *foliosa* Hook.f.; *Poa anceps* var. *densiflora* Hook.f.; *Poa anceps* var. *condensata* Cheeseman; *Poa affinis* var. *multiflora* Hook.f.; *Poa affinis* var. *agrostoides* Hook.f., *Poa anceps* G.Forst. subsp. *anceps*

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September–December

## FRUITING

November–May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An excellent grass that deserves to be more widely cultivated. *Poa anceps* is a very variable species and would repay some critical horticultural selection. It is best grown in full sun, and is excellent on banks where it can trail down slope. This species is tolerant of a wide range of conditions.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

## ETYMOLOGY

**poa**: Meadow grass

**anceps**: From the Latin an- 'two' and caputus 'head', meaning two-faced or two-edged

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

## NVS CODE

POAANC

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the ["Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland"](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (June 2005). Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-anceps/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026